

theories have been so often refuted, that there is no necessity here of narrowly examining them. They have this fatal defect, that they make many things sublime or beautiful which are not so, and exclude many chief instances of sublimity and beauty. For instance, if the mere personal hazard were a source of sublimity, a railway carriage would be as sublime an object as the spire of Salisbury. If the relaxation of the fibres were the true cause of beauty, a warm bath would, as has been well observed, be by far the most beautiful thing in the world, and the bracing air of a fine autumn morning, would be the very reverse of beautiful.

Of the theorists who trace beauty to purely mental causes, Plato must be considered the great head. To him we owe that fundamental principle developed in his "Dialogues," which, as expressed by Lord Jeffrey, asserts "that it is the mind alone that is beautiful, and that in perceiving beauty, it only contemplates the shadow of its own affections." On this general basis numerous specific theories have been subsequently founded; it is a text on which many commentaries have been written, of which some sadly mar the spirit of the original. For instance, Lord Jeffrey himself goes so far as to assert, that *all* the affections of the mind are sources of beauty. In his "Essay on the Principles of Taste," published first as a criticism of Mr. Alison's work on the same subject ("Edin. Rev." 1811), and subsequently republished in the "Encyclopædia Britannica," and also in his collected works, Vol. I., he ably refutes the errors of many prevalent theories, but substitutes one which appears to us more mischievous in its tendency than all. In his own words, "Every feeling which it is agreeable to experience, to recall, or to witness, may become the source of beauty in external objects, when it is so associated with them, as that their appearance reminds us of that feeling."

Now this theory makes the sources of beauty contingent on accidental influence of external events; an object being beautiful or not, in many cases, according as it has been first viewed under pleasurable or disagreeable circumstances. Referring taste wholly to association and recollection, he easily explains the diversity of notions on the subject of human beauty among the Hottentots and the Greeks, the Circassians and Laplanders; and comes to the conclusion that each class of features is *really* beautiful to those who are most accustomed to it. Of course he infers generally that "there is no standard of taste." "It is not only quite true," says he, "that there is no room for disputing about tastes, but that all tastes are equally just and correct, in so far as each individual speaks only of his own emotions;" and he agrees with Mr. Alison in considering various architectural tastes as "passions" rendered permanent by the durability of the works in which they are exercised.

Now all this is consistent,—but consistently wrong. If beauty depended wholly on casual associations—if objects which remind us of past pleasures be necessarily beautiful, every object in the world may be made to possess beauty. To a man who has been made rich by a lucky lawsuit, a title-deed, or a judge's wig, must be a lovelier object than the Venus de Medicis. It seems an absolute perversion of language to call a ten pound note or a leg of mutton beautiful. There can be no reasonable or consistent meaning in the word "beautiful" if it be capable of being seriously so applied. And yet money and meat frequently excite very pleasurable mental associations. A man of extensive benevolence, who is beloved and revered by a whole parish, may, from eccentricity, ride about in the sorriest horse and in the worst coat to be seen in the neighbourhood. His appearance is always and every where greeted; but it is always associated with the broken down hack and the tattered coat. Will his neighbours, then, deem these things beautiful because of their esteem for the owner?

But our objection is not complete without taking the contrary aspect of the question. Not merely are there many pleasurable associations apart from the perception of beauty, but many things may be excessively beautiful which are involuntarily connected with most mournful and painful recollections. External feminine grace has been frequently associated with the foulest depravity of heart; we suppose Lady Macbeth beautiful, and the imagined

blood-spots on her little hand do not mar its form. A tiger is beautiful; so is the hectic glow of consumption. To many lovers of nature, the spring, though it breathe of hope and new life, is not so fair as autumn, which exhibits only decay. The uniformity of vernal green, excessively—inexpressibly beautiful as it is, has not that variety of charms which belongs to the ruddy tints of the falling leaf and to the half-naked trees, as they gradually disrobe themselves in preparation for the long repose of the night of their existence.

This theory then appears to us to enormously overrate the influence of association. Many other theories exist, such as that of Sir Joshua Reynolds, that beauty consists in conformity with what is most usual, and the most perfect whole is the artificial collation of separately perfect members,—that of Addison, in his papers in the Pleasures of Imagination in the "Spectator," &c. But it is not necessary for our purpose to refer further to these, because, as has been before insisted, it is quite possible to explain all discrepancies of taste, and to erect a universal standard of beauty, without involving ourselves in an abstruse discussion as to its ultimate causes. No other postulate is made than this—that the love of the beauties of nature is a general feeling. It follows of necessity, if this be so, that unless men's tastes be altered by artificial and accidental causes, they will apply to art those principles which nature has taught them. Now their *natural* taste may originate in one or two distinct ways; it may be a distinct faculty of the mind, an instinct, or innate feeling; or, on the other hand, it may be a mere *habit*, a bias derived from constant inspection of natural objects, which recommend themselves to the eye by mere familiarity. It is indifferent which of these hypotheses be accepted, for both lead to the same result—that the taste, if not artificially perverted, will be disposed in favour of works of art which observe nature's rules, and be opposed to those which violate them. C.

#### ARCHITECTURE POETICALLY CONSIDERED.

LAST week Mr. G. Wightwick delivered a lecture at the Plymouth Athenæum, with this heading for a title. It took the shape of a poem on architecture, and had for its object, as he said, "not to proclaim the laws of ancient art, nor to discuss the rules of modern taste," but to draw their attention to the architecture of present and past times, in a manner which should be free from technicalities, and intelligible to all. How the lecturer executed his task our readers shall judge for themselves. Thus he spoke of Rome:—

"Go not there  
For Architecture's due. Rome's temples were  
But stol'n from Greece. Invention in the cause  
Of *Heaven* she never exercis'd. She wrought  
With wondrous power in all contrivances  
Which minister'd to man's pride,  
His pleasure, comfort,—say, his good, in much.  
She gave a plastic yielding to the fit  
And stubborn features of antique design.  
With light material she vaulted space.  
And emulated with capricious dome  
The heaven's concave. Range on range she pil'd  
Her columns' arcades, and, with th' ellipse  
Of her colossal theatre, gave room  
For populations. In her gorgeous baths  
Her swarth artificers, in thousands, lav'd  
Their limbs Herculean. In her palaces  
Th' imperial sway did vault itself in pomp  
Which startles record. Marble pillars, whose  
High tops o'erlook'd the panoramas vast  
Of the world's capital; and arches, rich  
In sculptur'd story, told of *Conquest*, far  
More dear to Rome than her own *Liberty*.  
In the blue distance merging, aqueducts  
Stretched o'er the flat *Maruina*, to bear in  
From their fresh gushing springs the mountain  
waters:

And e'en the fith and offal of the city  
Found an imperial road to vent themselves  
Into the torrent of the startled Tiber!—  
But this was *architectural* display;—  
Not the display of *Architecture's self*.  
*Greatness*—not *grandeur*—lifted here her head.  
Proud piles of masonry, hung with the spoils  
Of conquered Greece, arose, to captivate  
The sense of sight—but not to strike the soul  
Of feeling."

Of Greece he speaks more warmly:—

"Greece claims our homage now, with milder  
show

Of giant power; though not as if she lack'd it.  
Her gentler feeling for the *beautiful*  
All pride in *grandeur* qualifies. In vain  
She might essay to pass the fore-gone might  
Of Egypt; but, in grace of majesty,—  
In all that marks the mind's accomplishment  
To high imagining and finish'd thought,—  
In elegance conjoining dignity,—  
In noble form and feature exquisite,  
Commanding deference and winning love,—  
In sage simplicity,—in modest truth,—  
In ardent worship of fair Nature's forms  
(Ev'n where invention o'erstepped Nature's law.)  
In decorative taste,—and, more than all,  
In Sculpture's last perfection,—where, O where  
May Greece a fore-gone, or successor, find  
Behold her Temples: the maternal works  
Of that pure intellect, which, through her Laws,  
Her Poetry, Philosophy, proclaim'd  
Itself alike. Had History been mute,  
Nor sight of Sage or Poet had remain'd,  
Th' *Acropolis* with all its eloquence  
Of Art, had still declar'd, here must have been  
The intellectual arch monarchy.  
As on Olympus met the Court of Jove.  
So on th' Athenian rock the symbol stand  
Of the Greek mind in its analysis:  
Its strength, its majesty, its beauty, grace.  
Restore the Parthenon in all its pride:  
See high conception in its noble form:  
Each member in itself a studied piece  
Of a distinct perfection, subject to,  
And worthy of, the whole. Each ornament,  
As 'twere a fitting flow'r of rhetoric,  
By fancy us'd in aid of argument.  
Behold those Sculptures: models of the life,  
Which, as the world grows slier and more woe,  
Show more and yet more unattainable  
By rival skill or imitative care.  
Once more, survey the Temple round and round.  
No stoic but is a monument of thought:  
No moulding nor enrichment, howe'er  
Remote, but shows an artist's reverence  
For that all-seeing Eye, which dwells, well pleas'd,  
On offerings to its own exclusive sight."

When he came to the middle ages he spoke of some of the cathedrals, and of their excellencies, and said:—

"Religion, then, is the essential power  
Of the great art *Masonic*. Next to that,  
The spirits high of War and Chivalry  
Have wrought impressively, as many a keep  
And massive tower embattl'd; many an arch  
Portcullis'd; many a massive castle bold.  
In this our land of lion hearts still prove,  
Your noble towers baronial, Arundel.  
Stuart Raglan, watchtowers Warwick, yet erect  
Their frowning corbels' parapets, to claim  
The homage of romantic minds, and stir  
The soul with thoughts of manly hardihood.  
We wish not back again the blood-stain'd days  
Ye memorize; but, on your mould'ring forms,  
By time and vegetation harmonis'd  
Ev'n with the rocks ye stand on, till ye seem  
With them co-eval, the work of Nature both.—  
We gaze enraptur'd; and from further spoil,  
Of temple or more ruthless hand of man,  
Would fain preserve ye!"

Of some modern works, and the spirit of imitation which now prevails, he spoke severely:—

"Great things are doing now by little men,  
Associate in lack of any great one;  
And *Architectural Societies*  
In their assembled wisdom strive, at least,—  
If not to stimulate our Architects  
To models new, befitting present wants,—  
To make those present wants suit models old.  
Not in our churches only does this last  
For servile imitation crush the rise  
Of free invention; but, whatever is done,  
Must be in fashion of some age that's past—  
The taste as varied as the men who hold it.  
Strange that our tailors are not equally  
Requir'd to dress us as we dress our houses.  
Thus, may't be said, doth *Architecture* show  
As lady-patrons of Fancy list.  
First comes the family of *Churches*. A large  
Rectorial dowager walks, stately, in  
A cumbersome mantle of the Norman date.  
The lady Vicarage moves glorious  
In vest embroidered with the flowing lines  
Of Second Richard's time. Their daughters, of  
The Districts walk in perpendicular  
And Tudor garbs; and Chapel—easy girl—  
Comes simply deck'd with Early Lancet points.  
Sir *Senate House* appears in gorgeous robes  
Of fluted velvet, blazon'd o'er with shields  
Of heraldry and roses red and white.  
*Royal Exchange* in Cap Corinthian stands;  
And e'en *Cathedral* from the city comes  
In cloak capacious of reformed Rome.  
*Post Office* and *Museum* are as Greek  
As Stuart's tailors can turn them forth.  
Bank, only, wears some fashions of its own.  
Lo, *Auction-room* is Egypt top to toe;